PASS
THE
TORCH
ACT I

PASS THE TORCH
PLAYER'S GUIDE

The player's guide for the *Pass the Torch* narrative campaign, which starts at License Level 0.

By
Nick Hertzberg

Proofreader
Panique

Cover & Mech Art
Peyton Gee

Character Art
Szkin Art/R.S Koszka, Henrique 'Hen' Mota

Mission Art
Bastien Aufrere

Settlement Art
Tom Finnbarr Carroll, FORJA Studios

Template
Lancer InDesign Template by Jonas Tintenseher, CC BY 4.0
Based on: *Lancer* RPG Template by Michael Prijatelj, CC BY 4.0

Special Thanks to my Players
Birb, Dublin, Dusty, Janus, Linhares

Community Discord:
https://discord.gg/FwjDQuHsUq

Ironclad Escapades, LLC

— POWERED BY —

LANCER

Pass the Torch is not an official *Lancer* product; it is a third party work, and is not affiliated with Massif Press.
Pass the Torch is published via the *Lancer* Third Party License.

Lancer is copyright Massif Press.

SECTION 0
INTRODUCTION 4

SECTION 1
SETTING 5
TIMELINE 6
TERMS & TECHNOLOGIES 7
Lumenism 8
FACTIONS 10
Annorum Empyrea 10
Union: FourthComm 11
Farseers 12
Human Interests Consortium (HIC) 12
Church of the Flickering Flame 13
Horizon Collective 13
Pan-Concourse Holdings (PCH) 13

SECTION 2
THE GAME 14
CHOOSING A PATH 15
Annorum Path 15
Union Path 15
DOWNTIME ACTIONS 16

SECTION 3
APPENDIX 17
NEW OPTIONS 18
NEW TALENTS 18
NEW MECHS 19
APOLLO 20
NEMO 24
SCIPIO 28

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Pass the Torch,* a campaign for the Lancer tabletop RPG system. This campaign takes place more than a millennium after the timeline laid out in the *Lancer Core Rulebook,* building on its historical foundations.

In this grim future, the Milky Way burns with a mysterious nanite swarm, the Argent Plague, which has erased worlds and systems off the starmap. Under the weight of the Plague and a zealous insurrection, Union has stumbled, and its supremacy is challenged by the rising power of the Annorum Empyrea. The fragments of humanity grapple over ever-diminishing resources, clinging to life. Even the stars themselves are being consumed by the Plague, their lights dimming along with humanity's hope.

Then a torch ignites in the sea of guttering candles. An impossibly titanic planet, Beacon, appears beyond the edge of frontier space. Forward scouts announce that it is free from the Plague, and its scale could make it a viable refuge for humanity; a miracle made manifest.

Now, the galaxy holds its breath as the blink gate to Beacon nears completion.

This guide includes the following elements:

- Two narrative Paths, the Annorum Path and the Union Path.
- Details of the setting and factions.
- New player options, including talents and new mechs:
  - ◊ **SSC Apollo:** Soar through the air and send your foes crashing into the ground with this gravity-bending, mobile striker.
  - ◊ **IPS-N Nemo:** Melt your enemies and the battlefield into a nanite slurry, then orchestrate your swarm army to assist your allies.
  - ◊ **HA Scipio:** Overload your frothing reactor to rain massive explosions on your foes and transform the warzone into a radioactive wasteland.

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

This campaign begins with your pilot at LL0 and ends a couple missions after you reach LL12 over the course of three Acts (or books). The demo is two missions long and ends with you reaching LL2.

GM & PLAYER SAFETY

This campaign covers topics that can be fraught at the best of times, and at worst, harmful to the GM and the players. The book approaches these topics with respect, but it does not blunt the sharp edges of war and genocide. The GM should talk with their players prior to play, during session zero, and throughout the campaign to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the occurring events and scenes. The GM should also check in with themselves to make sure they're comfortable with running the game as it stands.

The following topics and themes appear in this campaign:

- War
- Death
- Violence against children
- Grief
- Suicide
- Genocide
- Cloning
- Memory editing
- Sex work

If anyone at the table is uncomfortable with certain themes or topics, then the GM can change the events to suit the group. Please make use of the following tools for GM & player safety:

- **X-Card:** http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg
- **Script Change Toolbox:** https://briebeau.com/thoughty/script-change
- **RPG Safety Toolkit:** http://bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit

PATHS

The game is split into two narrative Paths for the players to choose from. This choice must be made before the campaign starts. The Paths are: the **Annorum Path** and the **Union Path.** Each Path aligns the player characters (PCs) with the respective major factions of the Annorum or Union.

The chosen Path will determine which of the two the Prologue missions the PCs will undertake. It also affects future mission choice, and will lead to different options, combats, and more. Paths are explored in greater detail in the **Choosing a Path** section.

SECTION 1

SETTING

TIMELINE

The *Pass the Torch* campaign starts in the year 6134u. This timeline follows after the timeline from the *Lancer Core Rulebook.* The calendar system is the Union Era, abbreviated to 'u'.

- **5042u:** The Argent Plague is first discovered in the Cradle system, the home of Union.
- **5047u:** Cradle, once known as Earth, is utterly devoured by the Plague, followed by the rest of the planets in the Solar System. The Plague is carried on ships fleeing across the Milky Way.
- **5050-5172u:** Named the Vanishing Era, this is a dark period in history. Despite quarantine measures, the Plague begins appearing in star systems across the galaxy. It ravages planets, space stations, and habitats alike. Methods of fighting the Plague are limited to technologically inferior nanoswarms, barrier systems, and projected high energy fields. It's unknown how many billions of people die in this era.
- **5172u:** Dr. Sarah Lumen leads a team of scientists to discover dusklight and its ability to fight the Argent Plague. Volunteer forces begin the Luminous Crusade; they bring dusklight and order to every corner of a decaying galaxy and curb the spread of the Plague. The newly revealed Voladores technology for blinkjumping enables this swift delivery, though at great cost of life.
- **5188u:** After questioning the efficacy and motives of Union's actions, Dr. Lumen dies in a botched assassination that goes public. The subsequent outrage spurs rebellion and civil war throughout Union space. The death of a martyr sparks the formation of a new religion. The most pious and vengeful, including Pendragon, the NHP assistant of Dr. Lumen, call for the Second Luminous Crusade.
- **5188-5262u:** Already weakened by the Argent Plague which had ravaged the Core worlds, the loyalist remnants of Union fight a losing battle against revolutionary forces. Union's vast scope means that its civil war has to be waged across bloody decades.

  The finishing blow arrives when Lumenite Crusaders and Union revolutionists deliver a devastating kinetic bombardment from orbit against the loyalists' new capital on the planet Rodero, pushing the planet into an ice age. The shattered remnants of the loyalists formally vote to dissolve, ending the ThirdComm Period and marking the beginning of FourthComm.
- **5215-5277u:** During the struggle, old 'allies' seize opportunities in the growing power vacuum. The Karrakin Trade Baronies consolidate their power. Prime Baron Empyrea leads the effort to aid devastated Metropolitan and Diasporan worlds who feel abandoned by Union in their time of need.
- **5277u:** The people of the Concern herald Prime Baron Empyrea, an outspoken and devout Lumenite, as an element of the divine and the rightful leader in Union's place. She is crowned Anno, and the Annorum Empyrea is founded.
- **5309u:** Scientists discover that many stars are beginning to dim and lose mass. The cause is the Argent Plague, which is somehow able to survive on the stars' surface. Dusklight is found to be unable to protect the stars, the powerful light waves from direct sunlight altering and negating it.
- **5477u+:** War breaks out between the Annorum and Union. It occurs in irregular skirmishes, usually over claims to territorial space and planetary resources. The slow-burning war over control of vast swathes of the civilized galaxy continues to this day with occasional devastating flare ups.
- **6003u:** A station on the outermost edge of civilized Union space records an anomaly: a source of light emerging in a vast, empty gulf between star systems. The apparent and seemingly impossible birth of a star baffles scientists. In a galaxy where the lights of stars fade, slowly devoured by the Plague, the mysterious shining beacon in the dark only grows brighter. Union sends an expedition to explore it via blinkjumps.
- **6026u:** Those that survive the journey report a vast planet with abundant resources. It's suitable for life, with its own bizarre ecosystem. Most importantly, the planet is untouched by the Argent Plague. The remaining expedition members on Beacon go silent after their report never to be heard from again.

  The Annorum and Union broker a deal with the neutral custodians of the blink gates, the Farseers, to send an expedition to establish a major blink gate near the rogue planet. The two parties settle on naming the planet Beacon.
- **6134u:** The current year. Construction of the far flung blink gate nears completion. Forces, factions, and desperate families across the galaxy are making plans for Beacon.

TERMS & TECHNOLOGIES

Here is a list of key terms and concepts present throughout the campaign. What's shown here is the publically available knowledge about each subject, though it may not be the full story.

ARGENT PLAGUE

The Argent Plague is an advanced nanite blackwash capable of self-reproduction and destroying matter. Its existence is a threat to humanity. The only effective weapon against it is dusklight, which forces the swarm to destroy itself. Before dusklight, humanity fought it with technologically inferior nanoswarms, barrier systems, and projected high energy fields to limited effect. Its origin is a mystery, though there is speculation it was a Union or corporate weapons project that escaped from containment.

In low or zero-g, the Plague appears to be a silver cloud of shimmering dust. When many nanites gather together in a swarm, or when it's subjected to gravity, it appears semi-liquid. It spreads by forming nanite chains and kinetically 'lashing the whip' to launch itself in every direction at high speeds. This appears as swirling, massed threads that billow like flame extending from a central liquid mass, or in longer ropes and twisting 'silver rivers' if enough nanites gather. If a viewer can see it with the naked eye, then they are likely already coated with a faint dusting of nanites.

In gravitational fields, the Plague's nanite chain-whip method helps it spread across surfaces. In space, a swarm is capable of detecting nearby sources of gravity (i.e. matter) and launching nanites toward it. A launched nanite can travel for decades or centuries until it hits an object. Once a nanite encounters matter, it sticks it to itself and activates paracausal technology to make it vanish into the blink.

Each Plague nanite is roughly 750 nanometers across. It naturally consumes metal faster than other substances, since it can use a portion of most metals to replicate itself, building additional nanites rather than sending it all into the blink. It is even capable of surviving, though not replicating, on the surface of stars, where it continues its relentless consumption. It is estimated that the Plague has already erased up to 20% of the stellar mass of some stars, depending on the level of infection.

BLINKJUMPING

A highly dangerous method of repeatedly using blinkspace teleportation technology to carve a connection between vast distances without blink gates. With this tech, travelers can leap several light-years in an instant. By chaining blinkjumps together, it's even possible to reach untouched stars across the galaxy.

However, each blinkjump carries a small chance of the ship being lost in blinkspace. As such, long journeys tend to be made with numerous ships, of which only a fraction will arrive at the destination.

This technology was originally a secret of the Voladores, but they revealed it when the galaxy needed to rapidly spread the means to produce dusklight to the far corners of civilization. Cargo ships full of blinkdust were delivered by Crusaders via blinkjump, ultimately saving countless lives, though many of the Crusaders were lost to the blink along the way.

On many capital and large subline ships, blinkjumping has replaced the nearlight bolt as an emergency escape method. Still, a sudden and uncalculated blinkjump can just as easily teleport a ship into an asteroid as it can to safety, and even calculated blinkjumps are never 100% accurate or safe.

DUSKLIGHT

Dusklight is the only effective weapon against the Argent Plague. This invention of Dr. Sarah Lumen has shielded the civilized galaxy from outright consumption.

Today, dusklight generators are present on every starship, space station, and in every major planet-bound facility. Automated sensors pick up Plague nanite activity and activate the dusklight, dispersing it instantly. When it shines on Plague nanites, they shimmer into black void, then vanish. For other areas, mobile generators that produce large fields of dusklight are transported via ship or vehicle to cleanse any trace of Plague.

Like some other forms of blinklight, dusklight shines through physical objects, though it is not without limitations. It cannot shine through living, biological material. Because of this, it is difficult to completely eliminate the Plague in any area with life. A single nanite can survive inside the cells of an organism, even a single-celled bacterium. It will eventually devour it and construct more nanites to rebuild a swarm.

Dusklight is warm yellow and orange, and was named for its similarity to the last rays of light from a setting sun. Shadows cast by people within the light stretch far longer than they should. Dusklight also sometimes casts strange, misshapen shadows where there is nothing visible to block the light. Some people find it soothing, while others find it unsettling. Dusklight is typically deactivated when not in use since it washes out and mutes other colors, though Lumenite temples and churches keep dusklight lamps and LEDs shining at all hours.

The exact frequency and wavelength of the light is important, since anything else fails to disperse the Plague. The light is produced when it shines through glass or clear plastic laminated with a thin layer of blinkdust, an anomalous residue that collects on ships traveling through blinkspace.

Dusklight has a limited radius based on the strength of its light source, and it takes many generators to protect wide areas. Planet-sized dusklight generators do not exist, so many planets have patrolling ships that scan for Plague activity. With the generators they carry, they scour it from the surface, or from rare underground pockets.

NANOVACCINE

A form of greywash nanite designed to live in the bloodstream. Using tiny dusklight LEDs, they hunt down and disperse Argent Plague nanites that attach themselves to their host. They also fight with other non-Plague nanites as a form of immune system.
This greywash is long-lasting, but it cannot replicate itself, so it needs occasional booster shots. While powerful, the nanovaccine can be overwhelmed by a flood of Plague nanites.

The early versions of the vaccine did not use dusklight at all, instead relying on near-toxic levels of nanites to overwhelm and destroy the Plague before it multiplied in the body. Some people are unable to take the nanovaccine due to medical reasons, and are thus especially vulnerable to the Plague. These poor souls have deadly allergic reactions to any nanites, and must live hermetically sealed, since even a single Plague nanite can spell eventual death as it replicates inside their bodies.

NULLIGHT

A form of blinklight similar to dusklight but of a different frequency. Where it shines, dusklight has no effect; many forms of blinklight are nullified in its presence. Thus, nullight is considered sacrilegious by most practicing Lumenites, and illegal across almost all of human civilization. This hasn't stopped its use by terrorists, religious extremists, mercenaries, and unacknowledged military special operations units who weaponize the Plague.

Nullight penetrates physical, nonbiological objects like dusklight, but it's invisible to the human eye; it can best be detected by the way it extinguishes dusklight. Since nullight cannot penetrate biological entities, it doesn't interfere with internal nanovaccines fighting the Plague.

LUMENISM

As of the current date, the most prolific religion in the galaxy is Lumenism. Its central figure is the deceased scientist, Dr. Sarah Lumen, who invented dusklight in humanity's darkest hour.

BIRTH OF DUSKLIGHT

During the Vanishing Era, worlds were torn apart by the Argent Plague. Scientists led by Sarah developed a form of blinkspace-aspected light (or blinklight) which triggered the nanite swarm to consume itself and vanish. At last, a weapon to hold back an unstoppable foe.

Then began the Luminous Crusade to bring dusklight to every corner of Union space and beyond. The formula for its creation was delivered across the galaxy nearly instantaneously via the omninet, though the blinkdust required for its production was rarely on hand for worlds far from blink gates.

Armed with Volador blinkjump technology, volunteer forces formed up in relief militia corps to journey to every surviving world and deliver salvation to beleaguered locals. The Crusaders battled on every front to preserve diminishing space-borne matter, and local Union and Diasporan forces were either forced to assist their efforts or shunted out of relevance.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF LUMEN

As a result of saving countless worlds, Sarah Lumen was catapulted into instant stardom. The somewhat bookish, shy woman was suddenly thrown into the spotlight, a galaxy's worth of adoring devotees hanging on her every word. Adjusting to her situation as best she could, she used her platform to advocate for humanity's greatest virtues: unity between diverse peoples, helping those in need, and the pursuit of scientific truth.

Alas, in one fateful interview broadcast in real time across the omninet, Dr. Sarah Lumen was asked the question: *'What do you think of Union?'*

> **Dr. Sarah Lumen:** *"I think that Union is largely a force for good. Ensuring all are provided for is a grand cause… but it's not perfect. Where was Union when the Argent Plague gutted the outer rings? Diverting Crusaders and shipments of dusklight toward the inner rings, the core of Union space, all because some bureaucrats wanted to protect themselves above others. How can Union uphold its Utopian Pillars if it's unwilling to purge its bad elements?"*

This remark was captured and broadcasted as a revelation to recovering civilizations, who were only too eager to find somewhere to place the blame. The storm of criticism and economic warfare that followed battered the still floundering Union, despite Sarah's attempts to walk back her statements. Some extremists took drastic measures into their hands, and terrorist attacks in Union space grew rampant.

Then tragedy struck. Dr. Sarah Lumen was killed in a botched assassination ordered by a desperate Union CentComm representative of the Interstellar coalition. The operation, which was supposed to have looked like an accident, went sideways when a devotee amongst the assassins' ranks defected at the last moment to warn Lumen of the plan. The assassination instead became a messy, public affair that was captured and broadcasted across the galaxy.

Despite the kill order being a unilateral action without consensus by Union, Dr. Lumen was immediately heralded as a martyr. Her death sparked both a revolution and a holy war, the Second Luminous Crusade, that fractured the Union.

AFTER LUMEN

In the centuries since her death, Lumenism has formed around the worship of Dr. Sarah Lumen and her ideologies. Historians and theologians analyzed every aspect of the numerous records of her life and death. This ranged from her baby pictures posted to social media by her parents to catalogues of details from after the date of her martyrdom.

The dusklight research team, as well as the heroes of the First and Second Crusades, were raised to sainthood. Pendragon, the research NHP that worked on the project, acts as Dr. Lumen's still living herald. He has come into and out of the spotlight many times across the centuries.

Modern Lumenites are divided, with individual refractions (i.e. branches) of their faith holding differing fundamental truths inherent to their beliefs. The primary fault lines are:

- Dr. Lumen's existence as a human vs. a divine being.
- Belief in a centralized leadership vs. decentralization as a principle.
- The nature and measure of sin, and how the faithful should 'purge bad elements' from their midst.
- The pursuit of truth, and whether it should be done at any cost.
- The existence of an afterlife and the nature of the ultimate end state of the universe.

Naturally, extremist factions have risen and fallen in the intervening time. As of the current year, the most prominent refraction of Lumenism is the militant Church of the Flickering Flame.

LUMENISM TOUCHSTONES

While individual Lumenites and their refractions vary widely, these are some typical religious touchstones:

- Followers have a small dusklight LED somewhere on their body, such as on a cord around their neck or wrist. It visibly shines through clothing
- Places of worship, such as churches, tend to hold mass and services shrouded only in dusklight. The same is typically true for personal prayer.
- Terms of light and illumination are generally seen positively. I.e. "Walk the illuminated path", "She's a bright young child", "He's gone, joined with Lumen in her radiance".
- Terms of darkness are generally seen negatively. I.e. "That fool is more than a little dim", "She's wandering in shadow", "Damned to darkness".

FACTIONS

Beacon is a pie that everyone wants their finger in. No matter how big the pie, someone is always going to want a bigger share.

These are the major and minor factions present throughout the campaign. Use this section as a reference for publicly available knowledge on each group.

ANNORUM EMPYREA

An established major power prior to Union's rise, the Karrakin Trade Baronies can trace their origin to the days before the Fall of Old Earth. They weathered the rise and fall of both SecComm and ThirdComm. While they suffered from the Plague during the Vanishing Era, the Baronic Concern still fared far better than other Core worlds.

With the invention of dusklight and Union's civil war, they were perfectly positioned to establish control over vast swathes of previously Union space, folding them into the Baronic Concern. Thus, in the eyes of many, the Baronies became the de facto replacement for Union after it delivered aid, established order, and brokered ceasefires across the smoldering, plagued fragments of humanity.

Then Prime Baron Empyrea amassed power and flexed the autocratic authority granted to her during the state of emergency triggered by the Plague. She claimed the title of Anno on the Annorum Throne and founded her dynasty. There followed a period of violent quelling of dissent amongst the noble houses, some of whom disputed her ascension. The leaders of each major house were allowed to retain their title and seat on the Baronic Council, but the Council itself was relegated to an administrative and advisory role.

Empyrea became her family name passed on through her lineage to those who would succeed her. She had the blessing of the growing devout Lumenite factions, who saw her as an element of the divine itself. It is tradition for her descendants to ostensibly be Lumenites of one or another refraction, though not all have been so pious.

Recent Annos and their families have typically chosen non-denominational Lumenite faiths and distanced themselves from the major refractions to reduce their influence. Some have even rekindled traditions and belief in the Passions, which fell out of favor amongst the nobility with the rise of Lumenism. Many of the ignoble still hold to the old ways and practices, searching for meaning in omens and bonds.

Since the first inauguration, the Annorum Empyrea has seen many Annos. They varied in temperament, acting in turn as power-hungry dictators, as peaceful diplomats, and sometimes even as spiritual leaders in times of crisis. The previous Anno, Yandell, was a cruel dictator that held the Annorum in her iron grip.

The current Anno is Cyrus Empyrea, who grieves the recent loss of his Royal Consort, slain by assassins. The Ungratefuls, a rebellious force of insurgents, have claimed responsibility for the attack, and Anno Cyrus has responded with a furious wave of crackdowns and martial law imposed across the Concern.

Marshal Samuel Ludov has been sent to lead the Annorum Armada on Beacon. Anno Cyrus has also sent his disgraced son, Prince Altair, to represent the royal family's interests.

MILITARY STRENGTH

The Annorate Unified Command (AUC) has sent Armada 9 Khayradin, a multi-house coalition to Beacon. This Armada consists of naval groups, each of which includes 3 to 5 capital-class ships, and varying numbers of escort subline ships. The capital-class battlecruisers, rasées, and carriers each have a Captain who takes orders from the naval group's Commodore aboard their designated flagship. The armada as a whole is governed by Marshal Ludov who sits on the battlecruiser flagship, the *AENS Snapdragon* from the House of Stone's largest naval group.

In addition to warships, each house has sent house companies of ignoble soldiers, noble officers, and support noncombatants. The soldiers are typically disciplined and work well within their own house, though political friction can occur when mixing together disparate forces. Each house company's ground force has soldiers organized into corps under Knights, who are themselves placed in regiments under Knight-Commanders. Mechanized forces are their own units under Knight-Commanders, typically consisting entirely of kuirassers, a kavaliere leading kuirassers, or an elite team of kavalieres. Each ship's ground forces report to their respective Captain.

Annorate soldiers will sometimes refer to Union marines derogatively as 'Onions'.

UNION: FOURTHCOMM

Having left behind its Third Committee, the Fourth Committee is called a shadow of the former Union by many. While the foundational truths of its Utopian Pillars stand as strong as ever, Union's sway over humanity's future has waned. The same could be said of many institutions prior to the appearance of the Argent Plague.

Amongst Union's deliberative body, the Central Committee (CentComm), coalitions of old have dissolved and reformed. The following is a rundown of the current status of each of the major coalitions as named in the *Lancer Core Rulebook,* pg 348.

- **The Interstellar:** As the dominant coalition of ThirdComm, the majority of the party chose to remain loyalists during the civil war. The war ended when the surviving members cast their votes to end the Third Committee.
- **The Fourth Column:** A primarily neutral party during the civil war. Their neutrality ultimately drew the ire of the winners when it became clear that the Karrakins who formed the basis for the party had ambitions to take advantage of the power vacuum. Only a single member remains in CentComm, and its representative's vote is only a formality. Instead, the representative acts as a liaison between Union and the Annorum.
- **The New Humanity Front:** The party was divided in its interests. It wanted to take advantage of the situation to curb the central power of Union, yet at the same time it was diametrically opposed to the leading party of the revolution: the New Solidarity Coalition. No party was without internal strife during the fall of ThirdComm, but the Front's diverging priorities tore itself apart.
- **The New Solidarity Coalition:** The party grew in popularity during the days of the First Luminous Crusade. Here was the galaxy united against a common threat and rushing to each other's aid. The party celebrated the rise of Dr. Sarah Lumen, condemned the Interstellar for her death, and rallied together as revolutionists to overthrow the Third Committee.
- **The Verdant Social Arc:** The extreme environment brought about by the Vanishing Era caused the already shrinking party to accelerate its downward spiral. Its original anti-colonial message became more muddled and irrelevant in every election cycle after the devouring of Cradle. By the time Lumen was assassinated, the Arc was registered by historians as merely the largest of the independent parties.

Today, the heart of Union is generally aligned with the ideals of the New Solidarity Coalition. It favors swift and forceful intervention in support of its Utopian Pillars. This has led to criticism of its policies.

The modern Union often enters into complex political situations on Diasporan worlds and forces all parties to adopt its core tenets. While the intent is different, many comparisons are made to the crushing bootheel of SecComm's Anthrochauvinism.

This growing sentiment of unease within Union has created a power struggle between political parties over its attitude toward the Annorum. While other divisive topics of debate on the floor of CentComm form fault lines within the body of representatives, the Annorate threat bears the most significance. As such, representatives tend to divide themselves into one of the following three parties:

- The **Revivalists**, who want a more direct and focused war with the Annorum.
- The **Coalitionists,** who believe that Union should work toward beneficial cooperation, or at least peaceful coexistence, with the Annorum.
- The **Autonomists**, who desire no change to the current status quo, instead championing stability.

The Revivalist representative, Royce Merrick, has been given authority over the 14th Fleet on Beacon, though his decisions can be vetoed with a simple majority from CentComm's Naval Committee. The same applies to the Coalitionist representative, Vodena Park, and her oversight for all matters civilian and administrative.

MILITARY STRENGTH

The Union Naval Department (UN) has sent its 14th Fleet to Beacon. The 14th consists of battlegroups, each of which includes 3 to 5 capital-class ships, and numerous escort subline ships. The capital-class battleships, frigates, and carriers each have a Captain who takes orders from the battlegroup's Commander aboard their designated flagship. The fleet as a whole is governed by an Admiral who sits on their own flagship within the Prime battlegroup.

The marines are the human backbone of the UN. If the 14th needs boots on the ground, guns for ship compartment firefights, or chassis for a cavalry charge, it's always the marines who get the job done. They're a diverse group of people ranging from planets and stations across Union's vast territory; the marines rarely match uniforms, even if they hail from the same port. On a frontier planet like Beacon, most NCOs and low-ranking officers will quickly give up trying to enforce the already lenient standards of dress and grooming. The marines are typically organized into squads each led by an Ensign, who fall under a company commanded by a Lieutenant. The Warrant Officer, who oversees a brigade of multiple companies, reports directly to their ship's Captain.

Union marines will sometimes refer to Annorate soldiers derogatively as 'Annies'.

FARSEERS

The history of the Farseers begins with its roots in the Union's Office of Interstellar Transportation under ThirdComm.

CIVIL WAR

When Union's civil war began, its own leadership fractured into warring factions, often divided along department lines. Among the loyalists, the Office of Interstellar Transportation's (OIT) head administrator proved to be a critical asset. That ThirdComm weathered the storm of revolution and holy war for as long as it did can be credited to the OIT, which controlled the blink gate network, a strategic cornerstone.

After ThirdComm fell, there were decades of blame mongering and witch hunts throughout the disintegrating bureaus and departments. Leaders of FourthComm, along with the newly crowned Anno Empyrea, carefully sheltered OIT's personnel and their families from ongoing atrocities by placing them in guarded reservations around blink stations. These leaders feared that the loss of such niche technical expertise would mean irreparable harm for the blink gate network, the arteries and veins of the Milky Way.

FARSEER ACCORD

In the decades after the fall of ThirdComm, its FourthComm replacement and the Annorum would come to an agreement called the Farseer Accord. This dismantled the bureaucracy of the OIT and reformed it into a neutral party responsible for overseeing the blink network, allowing fair and controlled trade between Union and the Annorum. This also placed limitations on how the shared blink network could be utilized for war. For example, Annorum oversight and protocols meant that Union could not simply send a fleet to the Grand Teton Station serving the Annorate capital of Karrakis.

THE CLANS

Over the centuries since the Accord, the members of the defunct OIT and their families refashioned themselves into the Farseers Clans. They are groups who operate, maintain, and expand the blink gate network across the galaxy. Each clan is typically named after Union's territory classification by ring, e.g. the Kunlun Clan, the Himalaya Clan, the Cascade Clan. The clans freely trade, mingle, and bicker between blink stations; while physically distant, they are only a short jump away from each other.

The leadership of the Farseers is composed of Chieftains. Each station has its own Chieftain, who answers to the First Chieftain of each clan. The First Chieftains are occasionally called together in the First Council to discuss issues that affect all Farseers.

HUMAN INTERESTS CONSORTIUM (HIC)

As Union began to crack under the weight of first the Argent Plague and later a galaxy-wide rebellion, ThirdComm's death throes caused chaos for corporations. In many places, Union forces (loyalist and revolutionary) seized, stole, damaged, or destroyed corporate resources and property. Corporations, already suffering their own issues with the Plague, were often forced to pick sides in the war and fight for their own survival, or risk dissolution as they were picked clean by scavengers.

Towards the end of the Second Luminous Crusade, as the loyalists were breathing their last gasps, the boards of the largest corporations met and discussed a mutually beneficial arrangement. While individually small, the larger corporations could unite to pose a strong front against the powers of the Annorum Empyrea and Union, though its treaties stated it would only do so if said powers threatened their interests. Thus the Human Interests Consortium was founded.

Since then, the HIC has evolved into a channel of communications and a regulatory body for trade between corpro-states and customers. It is the goal of many corporations to someday meet the requisite financial and political status to become a member of the HIC.

The HIC's largest and most influential members are Interplanetary Shipping-Northstar (IPS-N), Smith-Shimano Corpro (SSC), and Harrison Armory (HA). These three corpro-states have sent delegates to Beacon ostensibly to represent the HIC.

CHURCH OF THE FLICKERING FLAME

A fundamentalist refraction of Lumenism, the Church of the Flickering Flame was born of tragedy and necessity. In 5404u, a chain of resource-rich planets on the frontier known as the Dawnline Shore had become a battleground for various interests ranging from corporate to political, including the planet Odeland. In the midst of this tension, the fanatical Lumenite terrorist group, the Dawn of Dust, performed an interstellar bombardment of Odeland, showering it with wide-range nullight generators and Argent Plague samples. The swarm multiplied and began to devour the world.

Governments and corporations bickered about what to do, stalling opponents and being stalled in return while colonists died. With their homes disintegrating around them, desperate families huddled under old barrier tech. They painted walls with mulch, bacteria paste, and even blood in order to keep the nullight out. Anything living would do, though they had to constantly repaint over dying and consumed material.

In their darkest hour, a group of Lumenites taking shelter in a hospital took drastic steps. After injecting themselves with a toxic amount of nanovaccine, enough for an entire colony, they stepped out of cover and into the plaguelands. With dusklight singing in their veins and the Plague tearing at their skin, they charged the nearby nullight generators and disabled them before succumbing to their injuries and nanite overload. Their brave act was replicated across the planet, until dusklight shone once more over Odeland. This act of martyrdom became known as the March of the Flickering Flame, a rallying flag to which the devout flocked, assembling their own refraction and congregation.

The enigmatic NHP Pendragon, known for being the last living member of the team that developed dusklight with Dr. Lumen, roused himself from his seclusion to voice his admiration for the Flickering Flame, casting himself as a devotee. Between Pendragon and the legendary act of sacrifice, the Church brought together a diverse set of people in a decentralized form of worship. The ‘leadership’ of the Flickering Flame is a council of Prelates, with templars to do their work. Each Prelate is only truly accountable to themselves unless they overstep and the council decides to intervene, though that is exceedingly rare.

HORIZON COLLECTIVE

The Argent Plague has left its mark on every planet and star in the Milky Way and beyond. Sea levels have fallen, forests were ravaged, and whole regions were lost to vast sinkholes. On some worlds, continents were consumed down to the still-molten mantle, or the planet itself was cored like an apple.

Worse still, the dimming light of the stars results in the galaxy growing colder and darker with each passing year. While humanity has struggled to adjust and persist, the flora and fauna of plagued planets could never be so adaptable, and many were pushed to extinction.

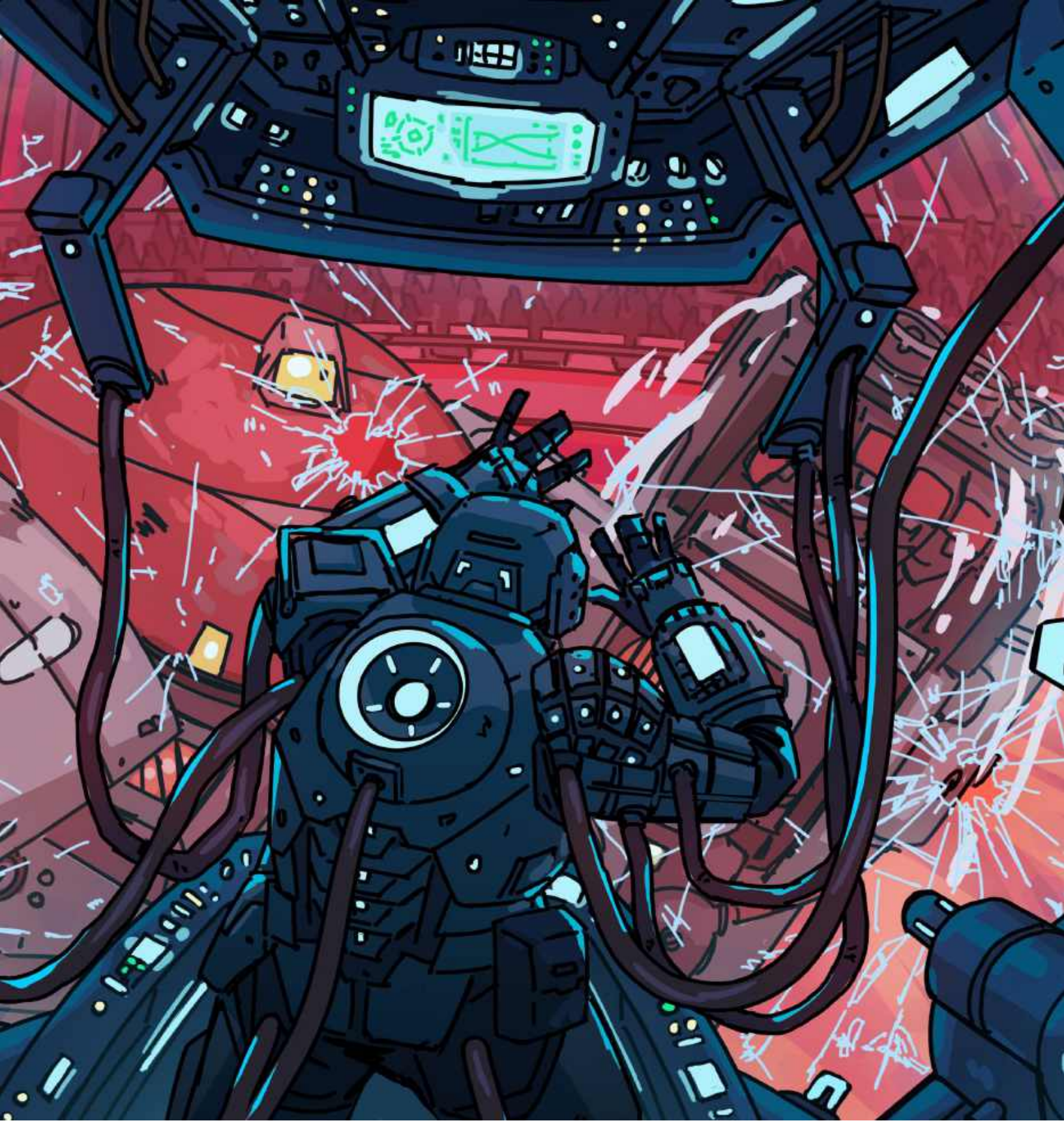
The loss of diversity of life gave rise to a wave of scientists, conservationists, and indigenous tribes working to preserve what they could. The focus on non-human life stoked sentiment against such efforts, questioning why protecting natural life was more important than aiding humanity.

Into the rising political tension stepped the Horizon Collective, a pro-NHP activist group with a bevy of unexpected resources. They bankrolled the conservation efforts while simultaneously asserting the equality and importance of all lifeforms, both causal and paracausal.

Since then, a variety of interested groups have formed around the Collective, which established itself as a font of knowledge, a safe harbor for endangered genetics, and the self-appointed representative for the NHPs incumbent to civilization. Efforts have expanded to protecting more intangible things, such as the subcultures and traditions of Diasporan peoples, and the research of esoteric (and sometimes illegal) topics, often involving NHPs and other paracausal entities.

PAN-CONCOURSE HOLDINGS (PCH)

Pan-Concourse Holdings is a powerful Enterprise. Enterprises fall somewhere on the spectrum between a national government, with control over one or more stations, and criminal syndicate, ‘taxing’ via protection rackets and sponsored piracy. PCH is especially infamous for its portfolio of fruitful businesses across the galaxy, including gambling parlors, brothels, bars, hotels, and grocery stores. They’re also well known for their media empire based on gladiatorial mech battles.



SECTION 2

THE GAME

CHOOSING A PATH

Before the campaign can begin, the players must choose either the **Annorum Path** or the **Union Path.**

ANNORUM PATH

Align yourself with the Annorum Empyrea and embark for Beacon with Armada 9 Khayradin.

PROLOGUE MISSION

For the Annorum Path's Prologue, you are to escort a VIP and her bodyguard to a remote spaceport on the desert planet of Tilimsan. A ship has been chartered to take you all to Beacon. An easy job, if everything goes to plan.

ANNORUM BACKGROUNDS

Collaborate with the GM to create a background for your group. Here are some potential backgrounds to be used directly or for inspiration:

- The PCs are noble kuirassers and members of a house company. They're either backed by a minor noble house, or are a small part of a larger deployment by a major house's banner company. A woman displayed an official warrant that authorizes her to commandeer the PCs for a mission.
- The PCs are mostly or entirely ignoble members of a free company, a legal and regulated entity similar to a mercenary company, but more romanticized. Substantial funds have been provided to secure the free company's services.
- The PCs are struggling to gain fame and recognition as a team of amateur pankrati, or mechanized gladiators that duel for sport. Their agent promises them a job that takes them to Beacon, where they can make a name for themselves.
- The PCs are desperate ignobles trying to get off of Tilimsan, a planet slowly becoming uninhabitable due to its cooling sun. Their mechs might be retrofitted civilian models, salvaged from wreckages, or used previously in banditry. They're approached by a woman who also wants off Tilimsan, and who has a ship chartered.
- The PCs are employed by a group outside the Annorum, such as a Long Rim Enterprise, a corporation, an interstellar merchant's guild, or some other faction. Money comes through hushed channels and the PCs are sent on a mission. They are to perform their duties and, more importantly, represent the group's interests on Beacon.

You may start as noble or ignoble. This factor may set different tones for the campaign, with people treating you as peers or subordinates. Regardless, you are not yet kavalieres (similar to medieval knights); your star has yet to rise.

UNION PATH

Align yourself with Union and embark for Beacon with the 14th Fleet.

PROLOGUE MISSION

In the Union Path's Prologue, you will clash with a mercenary boarding party aboard the *UNS-BB Chekhov* in order to restore communications. If you cannot, your battlegroup will suffer a catastrophic naval defeat by the Annorum.

UNION BACKGROUNDS

Collaborate with the GM to create a background for your group. Here are some potential backgrounds to be used directly or for inspiration:

- The PCs are newly minted pilot cadets fresh out of the Union naval academies. The veteran pilots aboard the ship are supposed to mentor the group and show them the ropes before they get into serious combat. Unfortunately, things don't shake out that way.
- The PCs are a capital ship's staff or passengers: security guards, cooks, janitors, mechanics, scholars, tourists, and so on. While they may have never stepped foot in a mech, they still answer the call for courageous individuals to salvage a dire situation.
- The PCs are members of Union's Department of Justice and Human Rights (DoJ/HR) who are sent on a critical assistance mission to Beacon. The department foresees the need for humanitarian aid and intervention in the planet's future, and needs boots on the ground.
- The PCs are part of an independent mercenary company of mech pilots. They've just signed on for a pricey long-term contract with Union for employment on Beacon. As is standard with every too-good-to-be-true contract, things immediately go sideways.
- The PCs are employed by a group outside Union, such as a Long Rim Enterprise, a corporation, an interstellar guild of merchants, or some other faction. They are hired as contractors by Union to serve as a semi-independent fighting force. They are to perform their duties and, more importantly, represent the group's interests on Beacon.

You may start as a marine directly within the chain of command, or as something else adjacent to the chain.

DOWNTIME ACTIONS

The PCs have access to the two additional downtime actions: **Serve the Faith** and **Dumpster Diving.**

SERVE THE FAITH

When you **Serve the Faith,** you're acting in accordance with the tenets of your religion or spirituality. You may be performing religious services (officially or unofficially) as a priest, performing charitable work, ferreting out sin and heresy, or just trying to connect to something greater than yourself.

State your intention and roll:

On a **9 or less,** things go awry and your devotion is tested. Choose one of the following:

- You have a crisis of faith.
- You are branded as impious or sinful.
- You lose yourself in your fervor and do something you regret.

On a **10-19,** you are rewarded for your pious efforts with one of the following as **Reserves:**

- Alms or the donation of supplies.
- A relationship with a fellow devotee.
- The means with which to punish enemies of the faith.
- A divine revelation.

However, questions arise about the strength of your faith from others or from within. You must perform one of the following acts to prove your devotion before you can take this downtime action again:

- Convert or smite a nonbeliever.
- Put on a grand display of your fervor.
- Sacrifice something important to you.
- Undergo a spiritual journey.

On a **20+,** you are exalted for your zeal. You may choose one of the rewards from the **10-19** list as **Reserves** and your faith is unquestioned.

DUMPSTER DIVING

When you go **Dumpster Diving,** you delve into the depths of the Junk Heap on Beacon to try and scrounge up something useful. Most of the Heap is useless piles of broken native subalterns, satellites, and rubble from prefabricated housing. Worse still, there's plenty of competitors who have already nabbed the easy pickings. Some of the Heap might even be dangerous. However, a true scavenger never stops searching for glorious paydirt.

State what specific Reserves you're looking for and roll:

On a **9 or less,** you don't get any **Reserves** and you roll on the **Useless Junk** table.

On a **10-19,** you get different **Reserves** than what you were looking for and you roll on the **Semi-Useless Junk** table.

On a **20+,** you get the **Reserves** you were looking for and you roll on the **Useful Junk** table.

On repeated table roll results, the GM can opt to allow the PC to reroll, though rolls on the **Useful Junk** table must be rerolled on the **Semi-Useless Junk** table.

PLAYER NOTE
The various Junk tables are only visible to the GM. Happy scavenging!

SECTION 3

APPENDIX

NEW OPTIONS

This section contains new options for players. These include the following:

- Two new talents: **Black Hat** and **Recollector.**
- Three new licenses: the **SSC Apollo,** the **IPS-N Nemo,** and the **HA Scipio.**

ADDITIONAL MECHANICS

In this section are additional rules relevant to combat, such as conditions, terms, and equipment tags. These have been taken from official Lancer supplements and had their source marked.

STATUS: INTANGIBLE

Intangible characters can move through obstructions such as characters or terrain but not end their turns in them. They, their actions, and any effects they own or control can only affect other Intangible characters and objects. Tangible characters can move through **Intangible** characters and objects but not end their turns inside their spaces and can't affect them in any way. **Intangible** characters cannot capture points or count for zones (for sitreps) and don't count as adjacent to tangible characters.

Effects that are already active on a character when they become **Intangible,** such as statuses, remain active, but effects that require an ongoing interaction between two characters or objects (like traps or force fields) end. If a mech becomes **Intangible,** its pilot remains **Intangible** for the same duration.

Source: *Field Guide to the Karrakin Trade Baronies pg. 138*

TAG: EXOTIC

Once acquired, this system becomes a permanent part of the character, but does not increase their **LL** or count as a **license rank** for the purposes of gaining core bonuses. If it is destroyed or damaged, it can be repaired or reprinted as any other gear with no penalty. Exotic gear can only be installed or removed during a **Full Repair**, like any other gear. Characters may install up to **two pieces of gear** with the **Exotic Gear** tag at a time, but can own any number of pieces with the tag.

Source: *No Room for a Wallflower - Act 1 pg. 10.*

NEW TALENTS

BLACK HAT

A professional politely steps inside, does their business, and leaves without a trace. Grace, poise, and precision. How very civil. How very boring.

A true omnidiver crashes through the front door, sets off every alarm, loots and pillages, torches the place, and pisses on ashes. Then they skedaddle before the admins finish furrowing their brows in concern. It's a dog eat god galaxy out there, so grip it by its cyberhandles and shake it till it breaks.

NETSPIKE

You gain **+1 Accuracy** on tech attacks against targets in the **Danger Zone.**

OMNIKNIGHT

Gain the following options for **Invade:**

Battering RAM. Characters receive **1 heat** whenever they are hit by a **tech attack** (other than this one) or fail a **Systems** save until their firewall is reset with a successful **Systems** check as a **quick action.** This effect does not stack with itself.

Topple Statue. If the target does not move by the end of its next turn, they are knocked **Prone** and become **Shredded** until the end of their following turn.

GLITCH KING

Your **Quick Tech Invade** actions gain **Threat 2** as if they were weapons. When a hostile character triggers **Overwatch** within an **Invade** action's **Threat,** you replace the **Skirmish** with the **Invade** action.

You also gain the following option for **Invade:**

Overload. If the target is **Exposed** after this **Invade,** it must make an **Engineering** saving throw. On a failure, the target and characters adjacent to it take half the target's **Heat Cap** as **explosive** damage. On a success, the target only takes half damage and adjacent characters are unaffected. This can only be used **1/round** on each character.

RECOLLECTOR

"Humans experiencing their first true forays into Witness have different ways of describing it. For some it is like déjà vu, recalling events that never happened to you. For others, it is like meeting an old friend for the first time.

"When I felt the call, I was terrified. To answer it was to bare my soul, to share everything: my joy, my pain, my glory, and my shame. I believed I was to be judged and found wanting. Instead, I found strong backs to bear my burdens alongside me, even as I bore theirs. I was not saved, nor redeemed, but none of us were. We treasured our brightest moments and mourned our sorrows, even as we forged new memories together."

MEMENTO

Make a **check** with your **Grit** as a **quick action** to invoke a memory. On a success, choose a character other than yourself within **Range 10** and affect it with one of the following **memory types:**

- **Despair:** The target is **Immobilized** and **Impaired** until the end of their next turn.
- **Fury:** The target gains **+1 Accuracy** on attacks until the end of their next turn. Their next attack that hits deals **+1d6 bonus damage.**
- **Joy:** The target gains **4+Grit Overshield.** While they have this **Overshield,** they gain **+1 Accuracy** to checks and saves.

Each **memory type** can only be used **1/mission.**

ECHOING PAST

Gain the following **memory types:**

- **Disgust:** The target receives **1 heat** each time it is hit by an attack or fails a save until the end of your next turn.
- **Fear:** The target is **Jammed** until the end of their next turn.
- **Hope:** The next time the target would receive **structure damage,** they are instead reduced to **1 HP.** This effect lasts until triggered, or until the end of the scene.

SHARED MEMORY

When you are successful on a **check** to invoke a memory**,** you may choose up to two characters other than yourself to affect. Even on a failure, you may still affect one character, though doing so counts as using the **memory type.**

If the result of **check** is **20+,** you can target up to three characters, including yourself, but an additional character chosen by the GM is also targeted without **Range** restrictions. If the memory type was **Despair, Fear,** or **Disgust,** then the additional target is yourself or an ally. If the memory type was **Fury, Joy,** or **Hope,** then the additional target is a hostile character.

NEW MECHS

Three new licenses are available for players:

- **SSC Apollo:** An acrobatic, close-range Striker frame that sends itself, its allies, and its opponents flying across the battlefield.
- **IPS-N Nemo:** A Support frame specialized in using nanite swarms to aid its allies. In doing so, it melts down the enemy and the world around them.
- **HA Scipio:** An Artillery frame dedicated to obliterating wide swathes of terrain, leaving irradiated ruins in its wake.

SIZE 1

SSC APOLLO

Striker/Controller

The most recent model showcased by the Exotic Materials Group has been the source of controversy, which has been drowned out due to the revolutionary concepts on display. The Apollo is a highly experimental frame developed utilizing the gravitational and extraspatial technology discovered on Beacon. While research into this technology is ongoing, the SSC wanted to leverage its edge over its competitors by releasing the beginnings of a new line of combat chassis prior to the blink gate to Beacon opening.

As a symbol, the Apollo demonstrates both SSC's commitment to bleeding edge innovation, and the ruthlessness of the Exotic Materials Group. In its race to leverage Beacon's advanced technology before the other manufacturers, the SSC placed immense pressure on the indebted Farseers. They withheld treatment of the potentially fatal alpinist syndrome, the genetic disease which haunts the Farseers, in order to squeeze the carefully safeguarded secrets of the Annamite clan on Beacon. Once the transaction was achieved, SSC wasted no time in iterating on the clan's designs.

CORE STATS

Size: 1
Armor: 0

HULL
HP: 8
Repair Cap: 3

AGILITY
Evasion: 10
Speed: 5

Save Target: 11
Sensors: 10

SYSTEMS
E-Defense: 8
Tech Attack: +0
SP: 7

ENGINEERING
Heat Cap: 5

TRAITS

TERMINAL VELOCITY

When the Apollo forces a character within **Sensors** to fall, the Apollo can accelerate the drop, changing the rules for falling damage. When they land, the character takes **1 kinetic AP** for every space fallen, to a maximum of **10 kinetic AP.** They must also make an **Agility** save or take **1d3 kinetic AP** and fall **Prone.**

REDIRECT MOMENTUM

1/round, when the Apollo pushes, pulls, or deals **Knockback** to a character, it can do so in a direction of the Apollo's choice instead of the usual direction.

VARIABLE WEIGHT

The Apollo can jump up to its full **Speed** when jumping horizontally, or twice as high when jumping vertically.

CORE SYSTEM

SINGULARITY DYNAMO

The beating heart of the Apollo is the extralspatial cavity in its core. The space within is subjected to powerful, swirling gravitational energy from which it manipulates external g-forces. On activation, the internally massive space is condensed into a dark bead in the eye of the maelstrom, a gravitic anomaly. What is produced is not quite a black hole, but your foes may not know the difference as they are pulled into the singularity.

Break the Tether
Quick Tech

Choose a character in **Sensors** and line of sight. They must pass a **Systems** save or fly **3 spaces** directly up and become **Immobilized** and float in place until the end of its next turn, though it can still fly or teleport. On its turn, the character can repeat the save as a **protocol** to end the **Immobilized** effect, though if it fails, it flies **3 spaces** up again. When the character loses its **Immobilized** condition, it begins to fall if it is not on the ground or another solid surface. Hostile characters can each be affected **1/scene.**

Black Mass
Active (1 CP), Full Action

Create a gravitational anomaly in a free space within **Sensors** and line of sight, which vanishes at the end of the round. The anomaly is an indestructible **Size 1/2** object that does not cause obstruction and affects gravity within **Burst 5.** Loose objects in the area (as decided by the GM) fall toward it when the anomaly appears and are destroyed if they enter its space. Ranged attacks originating inside the area are made with **+2 Difficulty.** Characters that are inside the area when it appears or that end their turn in it must succeed on a **Hull** save or **fly 3 spaces** toward the anomaly and become **Slowed** until the end of their next turn. Any character that enters the anomaly's space takes **2d6 kinetic damage** and is removed from the battlefield.

When the anomaly vanishes, any characters or objects that were destroyed by the anomaly reappear as a chunk of condensed material on the ground beneath the anomaly. The chunk is an object with **Size** equal to the combined **Size** of the destroyed objects and characters divided by 2 (minimum 1, maximum 5), shunting characters in its space to the nearest free space. Characters removed from the battlefield reappear in a free space of their choice adjacent to the chunk. Characters adjacent to the chunk treat all surfaces of the chunk as flat ground for the purposes of movement, and can move across it normally instead of climbing.

MOUNTS

FLEX MOUNT

HEAVY MOUNT

OPTIONAL FALLING RULES

The original rules for falling in the Lancer Core Rulebook may be insufficient for the amount of falling the Apollo does on a regular basis. For GMs with players planning to play Apollo, consider using this additional rule for falling:

A falling character falls through other characters without stopping. If a character's fall would end in another character's space, it is shunted to the nearest free space of the falling character's choice.

LICENSE I: GRAVITON REGULATOR, IMPACT ABSORBERS

Graviton Regulator
2 SP, 1 Heat (Self), Unique, Quick Action

Choose a willing ally within **Sensors** and line of sight or yourself. The target immediately falls in a direction of your choice, including vertically or any upward diagonal, even in areas with zero gravity and even if the target can fly. Falling in this manner does not count as involuntary movement and triggers reactions normally. The fall ends after a number of spaces equal to your **Speed,** and if the target can't fly and is not on the ground or an object, they fall again in the normal direction at the end of the turn.

When you use this system, you can choose to take **1 heat** to make the target immune to damage from falling until the end of the turn.

By manipulating the standard gravity field, or the lack thereof, any direction can become 'down'. Control of this concept proved challenging at first, resulting in some hilarious - and tragic - incidents. Such is the fate of mankind, who has always dreamed of flight. Falling properly, as it turns out, was the more difficult achievement.

Impact Absorbers
1 SP, Unique

Your mech becomes **Immune** to damage from falling.

The somewhat misleadingly named impact absorbers do not dampen kinetic forces. Instead, the system automatically senses ambient gravity, acceleration, and large bodies of mass in near proximity. On detecting a threat, the internal gravity field is adjusted away from the mass to compensate, rendering falls from high places no more dangerous than a step down a staircase. As a treat, the pilot's cockpit is subjected to a stable, adjustable level of gravity for their comfort, regardless of exterior g-forces.

LICENSE II: APOLLO FRAME, NEUTRON STARDUSTERS, ZERO POINT COLLIDER

Neutron Stardusters
Auxiliary Melee, Knockback 1
[1 Threat] [1d3+1 Kinetic]

On Critical Hit: The attack gains an additional **Knockback 2.**

The true innovation of weapons designed with gravity and extraspatial manipulation in mind was in the shaping of opposing forces. New modes of thinking had to be developed. Could gravity be utilized as a force multiplier for the velocity of hyperdense materials? Of course it could, that is obvious.

However, could a subtle tuning of gravity draw the target toward the heavy payload and meet it en route? Could the heightened impact impart residual gravitic force onto the target? Could a weapon's form and heft be extraspatially compressed into a smaller, sleeker design? Now these questions are worth asking.

Zero-Point Collider
2 SP, Unique, Quick Action

This system charges as a **quick action,** readying a gravitational pulse. The next time in the scene you hit a character with a **melee attack,** they must succeed on a **Systems** save or they begin falling in a direction of your choice, including vertically or any upward diagonal, even in areas with zero gravity and even if the target can fly. The fall ends after **5 spaces,** and if the target can't fly and is not on the ground or an object, they fall again in the normal direction at the end of the turn. A character can only take falling damage once per turn from this system.

- *"We will never forgive this injustice. The clans have a long memory."*
- *"Then you're rejecting our offer?"*
- *"You don't- you're monsters! Children will die without treatment!"*
- *"Then we have our price, and you have yours. Which would you rather pay?"*

LICENSE III: CENTRIPETAL CYCLER, SWORD OF DAMOCLES

Centripetal Cycler
2 SP, Unique, Reaction

Gain the **Orbit** reaction.

Space and mass are delicately contorted and melded into one. Without one or the other, the orbital ring collapses. Such an advanced concept could not have been developed by the Farseers in the brief time they have colonized Beacon. Thus it must have been found whole.

The situation becomes clear. We have only scratched the surface of what Beacon has to offer, and the Annamite clan has been feeding us scraps. We have used too light a hand.

Reaction Frame
Reaction, 1/round, 2 Heat (Self)

Trigger: A **ranged attack** that would deal **kinetic** or **explosive damage** misses you.

Effect: The projectile begins to orbit you. You can have up to 3 projectiles orbiting you at once. While a projectile is orbiting you, if a character ends their turn adjacent to you or enters adjacency for the first time in a round, they must succeed on an **Agility** save or take **1d6 kinetic damage** for each projectile in orbit and you lose all projectiles. If they succeed on the save, you keep your projectiles. You lose all projectiles when the current scene ends.

Sword of Damocles
Heavy Melee, 1 SP, Knockback 2
[2 Threat] [2d6 Kinetic]

Whenever you or another character within **Sensors** would fall at the end of your turn, you can instead have the fall begin instantly as a free action. If you fall on your turn, the weapon gains **+1 Accuracy,** as well as **bonus damage** equal to the amount of spaces you fell (to a maximum of **+3**) until the end of the turn.

Written in the margins on each of the schematics and design drafts the Farseers sent to the Exotic Materials Group were the following lines:

On thread borne high,
the bright blade rests overhead
for the right moment.

SIZE 1

IPS-N NEMO

Support

Early in the Vanishing Era, before the invention of dusklight, humanity struggled to find any viable defensive measures against the Argent Plague. Projected shields, stasis barriers, and other similar technologies saw limited success, but the scale required to protect a starship or station for long periods would drain battery banks dry. Interstellar traffic lanes became no-man's-lands with silvery clouds of nanites marking the spots where traveling ships had met their demise. IPS-N struggled during these dark days, and ultimately arrived at a solution: fight fire with fire.

The Nemo and its self-replicating, directed blackwash was humanity's last line of defense against the Plague. It became standard practice on interstellar ships to employ the model individually or in teams. When sensors detected Plague infection of a ship, the Nemo was deployed to counter it. After dusklight's introduction, the Nemo became a subject of controversy due to its use of blackwash nanites. While its glory has faded, certain galactic travelers with lifespans extended by relativity recall the bygone era in which only the Nemo stood between a ship's crew and a devouring swarm. Their protests forced IPS-N to keep the Nemo in production.

CORE STATS

Size: 1
Armor: 1
HULL
HP: 6
Repair Cap: 5
AGILITY
Evasion: 8
Speed: 5

Save Target: 11
Sensors: 12
SYSTEMS
E-Defense: 10
Tech Attack: +1
SP: 7
ENGINEERING
Heat Cap: 6

TRAITS

STERLING SWARM

3/round, when an object or a mech is destroyed within **Sensors,** the Nemo can use a **reaction** to create a nanomachine swarm in a **free space** within **Range 2** of the target. No more than **6 swarms** can exist at once. You can disperse any number of swarms as a **free action,** removing them from the battlefield.

When a character enters a swarm's space or starts its turn in it, the Nemo can remove the swarm. If the swarm is removed, the character receives one of the following effects of your choice:

- Clear **2 heat.**
- Clear **Impaired, Lock On, Slowed, Shredded,** or all **burn** from characters other than itself.
- The character can spend **1 Repair** as a **quick action** to restore all **HP** before the end of its next turn.
- Treat the character as if they entered **dangerous terrain,** dealing **kinetic damage**.

CORE SYSTEM

SYMPHONY OF SILVER

Nanowashes are separated into different categories based on their lifespan and their reproduction methods. Whitewash nanites are for single-use jobs. Greywash nanites are for sustained use, and are often (though not always) weaponized, targeting biological and/or nonbiological material. Neither whitewash nor greywash nanites self-replicate outside of specific conditions.

Blackwash nanites are doomsday weapons capable of self-replication. The prime example of this is the Argent Plague, which has erased worlds. At the time, the only answer was to fight blackwash with blackwash in a clashing feast for resources. The Nemo's blackwash is a chained wildfire that must be controlled at any cost; after all, nobody wants to unleash a second Argent Plague.

Orchestrate

Protocol, 1 Heat (Self)

The Nemo causes up to **2 swarms** within **Sensors** to move up to **4 spaces.** This movement can pass through characters and objects, and can end in their space.

TRAITS

NANOWEAVE

When the Nemo takes **structure damage,** it can create **2 swarms** in **free spaces** within **Range 2** of itself.

MOUNTS

FLEX MOUNT **MAIN MOUNT**

Rising Tide
Active (1 CP), Quick Action

For the rest of the scene, you gain the following benefits:

- At the end of each of your turns, you can create a swarm in a free space within **Sensors.**
- **Orchestrate** now affects an unlimited number of swarms.
- At the end of your turn, swarms deal **10 AP kinetic damage** to objects in their space.

LICENSE I: SALVAGE TROUPE, NETWORK NANOWALL

Salvage Troupe
2 SP, Limited 5, Quick Action

Target **up to 2 objects** within **Sensors** and line of sight to be consumed by nanomachines, expending a charge for each target. At the end of each of your turns, the target takes **10 AP kinetic damage.** When the object is destroyed, it emits a **Burst 1** cloud until the end of your next turn. The cloud is **dangerous terrain,** dealing **kinetic damage,** for hostile characters.

While the Plague was technologically superior and capable of annihilating matter, field testing proved that it could be defeated with overwhelming numbers. On a ship, the bulkheads and compartments themselves become ammunition for a nanowar. Such battles became a race to eradicate the Plague before the ship was devoured between the warring forces.

Network Nanowall
2 SP, Limited 3, Unique, Quick Tech

Expend a charge and choose an ally within line of sight and Sensors. **Tech attacks** against the ally receive **+2 Difficulty** until the end of the scene. When a **tech attack** misses the ally, you can either allow this effect to end, or take **2 heat** to continue the effect. When you allow this effect to end, you and the ally clear **heat** equal to the amount of **tech attacks** that missed the ally while under the effect.

We are helpless by ourselves. Tiny, stupid, alone. However, with some friends, we form a network to share resources. With 10^{25} friends we are no longer helpless, nor stupid. Good friends watch each other's backs. Would you like to be our friend?

LICENSE II: NEMO FRAME, SABOTEUR NANITES, SCATTER NEXUS

Saboteur Nanites
2 SP, Unique

Hostile characters within **Sensors** that would make an **Engineering** check due to **dangerous terrain** must instead make an **Engineering** save against your **Save Target.**

Like any good army, a swarm is held together by its specialists. Hardened metal shells take time to dismantle. That's why you send in saboteur nanites to soften up a target, using microbursts of energy to preheat it and weaken its structure before the swarm cuts in like hot a knife through butter.

Scatter Nexus
Auxiliary Nexus, Smart, Loading, 1 Heat (Self)
[Range 8][1 Kinetic + 1d3 Burn]

More like a shotgun than a nanite dispersal tool, the scatter nexus delivers payloads of numerous gel beads. The gel acts as a cushion for the nanites riding inside. On impact, the hungry little troopers get to work.

Blackwash Flood

3 SP, Limited 2, Full Action

You unleash a nanite flood, creating a **Blast 2** area within line of sight and Sensors. The flood is **dangerous terrain,** dealing **kinetic damage,** for hostile characters. As a **protocol,** you can cause the flood to spread to spaces adjacent to its area, extending it on any edge, including spaces added in the same turn. The amount of spaces you can add equals 1 + the amount of applicable items below:

- A hostile character is in the flood.
- You or an ally are in the flood.
- An object is in the flood. The object takes **10 AP kinetic damage** when this item is applied.
- A character in the flood was attacked since the start of your previous turn.

Each item can only be applied once per round.

You can use a **quick action** to disperse the flood. When you do so, the following effects occur:

- Allies in the flood gain **Resistance** to **damage** and **burn** until the end of their next turn.
- Hostile characters in the flood must succeed on an **Engineering** save or become **Shredded** until the end of their next turn.

During the darkest days of the Vanishing Era, a superstition arose about those devoured by the Argent Plague. It was said that their souls were devoured with their bodies, the spirit atomized and distributed amongst the swarm, becoming a part of it. On many starships, it became the unspoken responsibility of the defensive swarm controller to consume the crew if the ship would be lost to infection, rather than let the Plague have them.

D-Integrator Nexus

Main Nexus, 1 SP, Smart, 1 Heat (Self)
[Range 10][1 Kinetic + 3 Burn]

Against objects, this weapon gains **+1 Accuracy** and deals **10 AP kinetic damage.**

On Critical Hit: Deal **double damage** to objects. Additionally, deal **10 AP kinetic damage** to an object within **Range 3** of the target.

An internal reservoir hooks up to a powerful hydraulic pump. When activated, this tools ejects a coating stream of nanites. The firehose-like pressure washes the Plague away while coating high priority resources with a friendly swarm, ready to dismantle and repurpose it.

SIZE 2

HA SCIPIO

Artillery

After the death of Dr. Sarah Lumen, the Union burned with rebellion. In his fury, Pendragon called for a Second Luminous Crusade to overthrow the Third Committee, and the people's response was deafening. During one of many skirmishes, a Crusader battlegroup of Union revolutionaries commanded by Pendragon pursued the fleeing remnants of a Union loyalist battlegroup. As their damaged ships failed, the loyalists crash landed on Gutton, the moon of a gas giant. With just enough atmosphere to support lichen and other small lifeforms, Gutton had been marked for future development by Harrison Armory.

The loyalists discovered a cache of ancient but operational prototype mechs that had been sealed and forgotten in the tumult of the Hercynian Crisis. The Scipio was originally slated for deployment on Hercynia as part of the ongoing TBK process. Instead, they were utilized to scorch the earth and scar the world in a war between brothers. After the last loyalists were finally hunted down, the once hopeful Gutton had become a tomb world, its surface stained with radiation and bereft of life.

CORE STATS

Size: 2
Armor: 1

HULL
HP: 8
Repair Cap: 4

AGILITY
Evasion: 7
Speed: 3

Save Target: 11
Sensors: 10

SYSTEMS
E-Defense: 6
Tech Attack: -2
SP: 6

ENGINEERING
Heat Cap: 7

TRAITS

CHAIN REACTION

When the Scipio takes **stress damage,** all of its attacks, talents, and systems that create a **Blast** or **Burst** have their size increased by one increment (e.g. **Blast 2** becomes **Blast 3**) until the end of your next turn. If it takes **stress damage** on your turn, this effect instead ends at the end of the current turn.

MOLTEN REACTOR

While resting, the Scipio can be repaired at a rate of **1 Repair** per **1 stress damage,** instead of **2 Repairs.**

RADIOACTIVE

While the Scipio is in the **Danger Zone, Biological** characters that start their turn adjacent to the Scipio must succeed on a **Hull** save or become **Impaired** until the end of their next turn.

MOUNTS

MAIN MOUNT | MAIN MOUNT | HEAVY MOUNT

CORE SYSTEM

QUANTUM ENTANGLER

At the heart of Scipio's design is a highly experimental nuclear reactor adapted from early forays into blink gate development. This engine introduces uncertainty into the nature of the chassis and the pilot that results in a parallel existence, a paradox destined for catastrophic collapse. Pilots of the Scipio frequently display the symptoms of psychosis and dissociative identity disorder.

FALLOUT

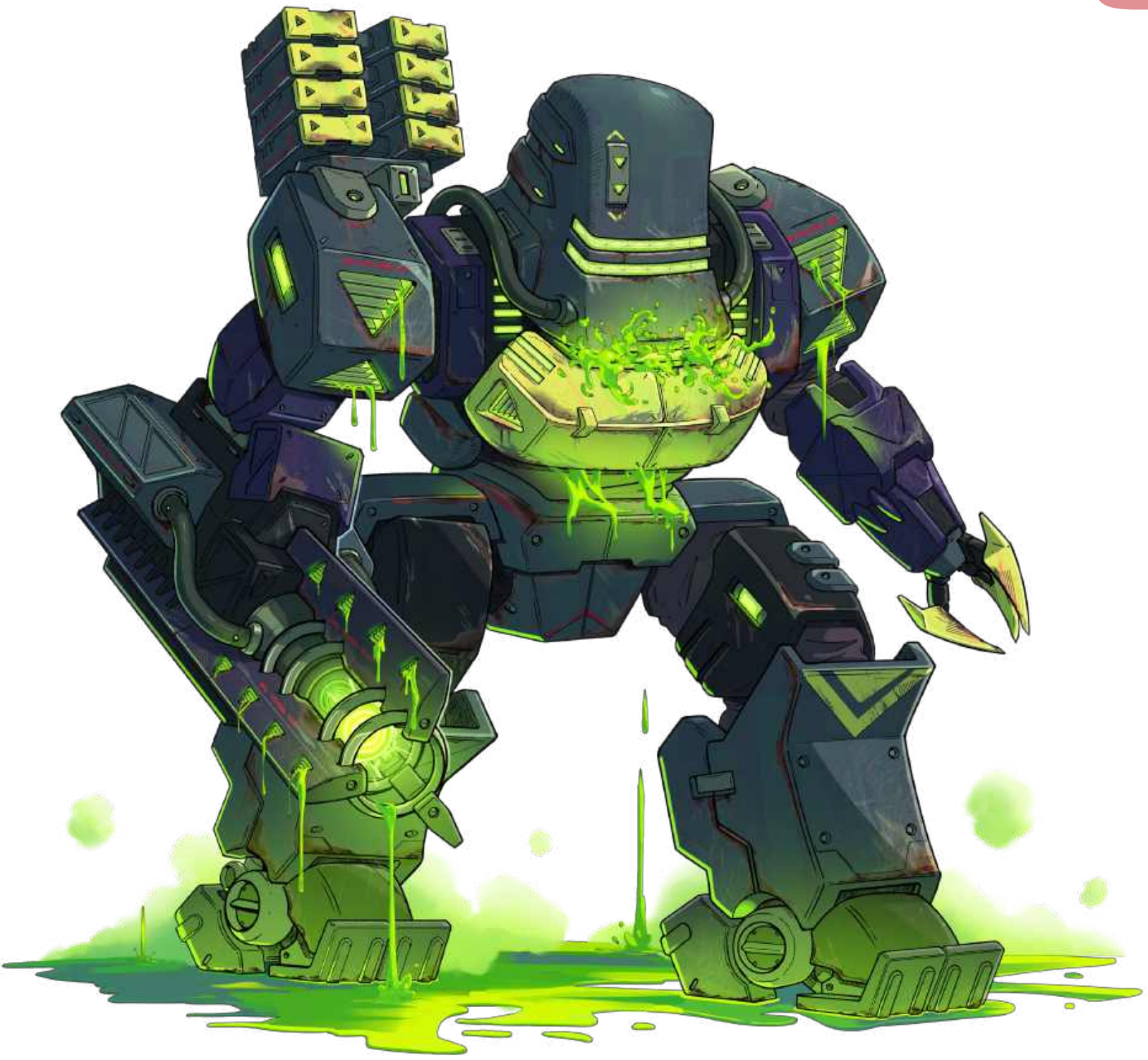
1/round, when the Scipio attacks with a **Blast, Burst,** or **Cone** weapon while in the **Danger Zone,** it leaves clouds of radioactive waste. After the attack resolves, place a cloud in **1 free space** within the affected area if the attack was a **Skirmish,** or 2 free spaces if the attack was part of a **Barrage.** When a character enters a cloud, they take **2 heat** and the cloud vanishes.

Unstable Fission

Active (1 CP), Protocol

Create a copy of yourself (including a copy of the pilot if they were inside the mech) in a free space within **Sensors** and line of sight. Treat the copy as its own mech character that you control, tracking its statistics and conditions separately, and having it take its own turn.

At the end of the round, flip a coin to determine which of your two mechs is unstable. The unstable mech instantly suffers a reactor meltdown if it hasn't already been destroyed, and if a copy of the pilot was created, the unstable pilot is vaporized wherever they are.



LICENSE I: CATALYST CHARGES, VOLATILITY DRIVER

Catalyst Charges
2 SP, Limited 2, Unique, 1 Heat (Self)

Expend a charge for one of the following effects:

- **Catalyst Grenade** (*Grenade*, **Range 5, Blast 1**): All characters within the affected area must pass an **Engineering** save or take **2 heat.** On a success, they take **1 heat.** Any mines within the affected area will trigger, and if they create a **Burst,** then their size is increased by one increment (e.g. **Burst 1** becomes **Burst 2).**
- **Catalyst Mine** (**Mine, Burst 1**): All characters within the affected area must pass an **Engineering** save or take **4 heat.** On a success, they take **2 heat.** Any other mines within the affected area will trigger, and if they create a **Burst,** then their size is increased by one increment (e.g. **Burst 1** becomes **Burst 2**).

In the midst of the Battle of Gutton, the Crusaders found themselves forced to march through minefields in pursuit of Union forces. After the first mistakes, progress ground to a halt. One wrong misstep was akin to throwing a lit match into a crate of dynamite. While the catalyst charges could not be tested on Hercynia as originally planned, the Think Tank could not ask for a more thorough field test.

Volatility Driver
Main Cannon, Knockback 1, Loading, 1 Heat (Self)
[Range 15] [Blast 1] [1d6+1 Explosive]

On Critical Hit: If your target has the **Mech** tag, increase the **Blast** by one increment (e.g. **Blast** 1 becomes **Blast 2**), rolling attacks against additional targets in the larger **Blast.** Each additional critical hit triggers this effect again, to a maximum of **Blast 4.**

One of the Think Tank's more abstruse creations began as a thought experiment. Could the Armory leverage the difference between their own superior cold fusion reactors vs. an inferior opponent? The result was only a mixed success. The volatility driver weaponized excess leakage from reactors as a force multiplier. However, a reactor's quality was irrelevant in the resultant escalating chain reaction. Under its reign, all are treated equally.

LICENSE II: SCIPIO FRAME, DISCHARGE REACTOR, FIRE FOR EFFECT

Discharge Reactor
2 SP, Unique, Quick Action

You immediately take **1 stress damage** and reload your **Loading** weapons. Do not make an **overheating check,** though you still suffer the usual effects of reaching **0 Stress.** You also choose one of the following effects:

- Clear all **heat.**
- Set your **heat** equal to half your **Heat Cap,** putting you in the **Danger Zone.** Characters within **Burst 2** must succeed on an **Engineering** save or take **heat** equal to ¼ your **Heat Cap.**

The Think Tank theorized that by using fluid for both fuel and coolant in a reactor, a pilot would have greater control over its thermodynamics. In the case of an imminent overflow, the chassis could void the boiling, radioactive froth. Out of consideration for the environment, this technology is only authorized for use outside the Armory's Purview.

Fire for Effect
2 SP, Limited 3, Unique, 2 Heat (Self)

After you make a **Line, Cone, Burst,** or **Blast** pattern as part of an attack, you can make the area **difficult terrain** until the end of your next turn.

"I know this isn't what you would have wanted. I'm no idiot, just a fool. I've realized that I'm not doing this for you, but for myself. For my pride. For the light that left my life with you."
- Unattributed log from the Battle of Gutton.

LICENSE III: CLUSTER CASTER, FRIEND-OR-FOE SHAPING

Cluster Caster
Heavy Cannon, Arcing, 2 Heat (Self)
[Range 20] [Blast 1] [1d6+3 Explosive]

When you attack with this weapon, you can overload it to make it **Blast 2,** and the affected area becomes **dangerous terrain** until the end of your next turn, dealing **explosive damage.** The weapon must then be reloaded before it can be used again as if it had the **Loading** tag.

The Armory's state of the art cluster munitions have a failure rate of %1. Given the cluster caster discharges 480 bomblets per payload, this results in an average of 4.8 unexploded bomblets. Testing shows that only 12% of this unexploded ordnance is at risk of rearming and damaging unintended targets. These figures are well within the legal parameters of munitions standards for most of civilized space.

Friend-or-Foe Shaping
3 SP, Unique

Allies have **Resistance** to damage you deal with attacks and saving throws. When you would roll to attack an ally, you can instead take **2 heat** to have the attack automatically miss.

Pendragon was designed for research, not tactics. Still, he showed great aptitude for military command. He considered connections, relationships, correlation, and causation to formulate grand strategies that overwhelmed opponents. When he was delivered the casualty report for the Battle of Gutton, he spent 5 hours and 47 minutes in silence, calculating the toll. After an unscheduled cycling, Pendragon ordered the battlegroup to prepare for the next push into loyalist space.